

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

1. (Currently amended) A scanning electron microscope comprising: an electron source; an image shifting deflector system including ~~two deflectors disposed respectively at upper and lower stages~~ a first deflector and a second deflector to shift an irradiation position of a primary electron beam emitted by the electron source on a specimen; and an objective lens that focuses the primary electron beam;

wherein the objective lens has a lens gap opening toward the specimen, the first deflector ~~deflector, disposed at the lower stage on the side of~~ closer to the specimen than the second deflector, forms a deflecting electric field in a region corresponding to an effective principal plane of the objective lens, and the first deflector is an octupole deflector that includes a plurality of conductor plates, a primary electron beam passing aperture, and insulating slits extending radially from the primary electron beam aperture.

2. (Currently Amended) The scanning electron microscope according to claim 1, wherein the first deflector ~~disposed at the lower stage~~ creates an electric field that suppresses off-axis deviation of the primary electron beam ~~that will be caused by a magnetic field created by the~~ objective lens.

3. (Original) The scanning electron microscope according to claim 1, wherein the image shifting deflector system serves also as a scanning deflector system for deflecting the primary electron beam to scan the specimen with the primary electron beam.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) The scanning electron microscope according to claim [[4]] 1, wherein the ~~octupole~~ first deflector has an insulating base plate provided with a the primary electron beam passing aperture and the insulating slits ~~formed so as to extend~~ extending radially from the electron beam passing aperture, and

wherein at least a portion of both opposite surfaces of a part of the disk-insulating plate around the electron beam passing aperture-aperture, and side-surfaces a side surface of the electron beam passing aperture-aperture, and the insulating slits are coated with conductive films.

6. (Currently Amended) The scanning electron microscope according to claim 5, wherein the insulating base plate has a conductive, cylindrical part formed around the primary electron beam passing aperture, and the conductive, cylindrical part of the insulating base plate is inserted in a primary electron beam passing aperture of the objective lens.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) The scanning electron microscope according to claim 1 further comprising a secondary signal detector ~~capable of~~ for detecting a secondary signal produced by the specimen, said secondary signal detector including a secondary electron conversion electrode ~~that converts~~ to convert highly accelerated electrons that are produced when the specimen is irradiated with the primary electron ~~beam-beam,~~ into secondary electrons.

9. (Currently Amended) The scanning electron microscope according to claim 1 further comprising: a conversion electrode that emits secondary electrons upon bombardment with electrons emitted by the specimen ~~when~~ in response to the specimen being irradiated with the primary electron beam; and a secondary electron detector that deflects the secondary electrons emitted by the conversion electrode off the axis of the primary electron beam and detects the secondary electrons.

10. (Currently Amended) The scanning electron microscope according to claim 9, wherein the conversion electrode emits the secondary electrons when a specific ~~part thereof~~ portion of the conversion electrode is bombarded by the electrons.

11. (Original) The scanning electron microscope according to claim 1 further comprising a Wien filter for controlling off-axis aberration of the objective.

12. (Currently amended) A scanning electron microscope comprising: an electron source; an image shifting deflector system including ~~two deflectors disposed respectively at upper and lower stages~~ a first deflector and a second deflector to shift an irradiation position of a primary electron beam emitted by the electron source on a specimen; and an objective lens that focuses the primary electron beam using a magnetic field leaked from a lens gap of the objective lens; and

~~wherein~~ a retarding electric field creating means that creates a retarding electric field for retarding the primary electron beam is disposed between the specimen and the objective lens, the lens gap of the objective lens opens ~~has a lens gap opening~~ toward the specimen, and the first deflector ~~deflector~~ disposed at the lower stage on the side of closer to the specimen than the second

deflector is and interposed between the objective lens and the specimen, wherein the retarding electric field creating means deflects the primary electron beam using an electrostatic field to offset a deflection caused by a leaked magnetic field.

13. (Currently Amended) The scanning electron microscope according to claim 12 further comprising: a conversion electrode that emits secondary electrons upon bombardment with electrons emitted by the specimen ~~when~~ in response to the specimen being irradiated with the primary electron beam; and a secondary electron detector that deflects the secondary electrons emitted by the conversion electrode off the axis of the primary electron beam and detects the secondary electrons.

14. (Original) The scanning electron microscope according to claim 13, wherein an energy filter that discriminates energy is interposed between the conversion electrode and the specimen.

15. (Currently amended) A scanning electron microscope comprising: an electron source; an objective that focuses the primary electron beam emitted from the electron source; a scanning deflector means that includes a first deflector and a second deflector to shift deflects the primary electron beam to scan the specimen with the primary electron beam; an image shifting deflector means that shifts a center of scanning; a secondary signal detector that detects a secondary signal produced by the specimen when irradiated with the primary electron beam; and a height measuring means that measures the height of the specimen by using a laser beam;

~~wherein the image shifting deflector means is a electrostatic electrode having multiple poles,~~

wherein:

the objective lens has a lens gap opening toward the specimen; and

the first deflector, disposed closer to the specimen than the second deflector, forms a deflecting electric field in a region corresponding to an effective principle plane of the objective lens;

and

wherein the first deflector is an octupole deflector including a plurality of conductor plates, a primary electron beam passing aperture, and insulating slits extending radially from the primary electron beam aperture, and

the laser beam travels through insulating slits formed between the ~~multiple poles~~ conductor plates.

16. (Currently amended) A scanning electron microscope comprising: an electron source; an image shifting deflector system including ~~two deflectors disposed respectively at upper and lower stages~~ a first deflector and a second deflector to shift an irradiation position of a primary electron beam emitted by the electron source on a specimen; and ~~an a magnetic objective lens and an electrostatic lens that focuses-focus~~ the primary electron beam;

wherein the magnetic objective lens has upper and lower magnetic poles a first magnetic pole and a second magnetic pole, an opening formed in the lower first magnetic pole is greater than an opening formed in the upper second magnetic pole, the first deflector-deflector, disposed at the lower stage on the side of closer to the specimen than the second deflector is- and interposed

between the objective lens and the specimen, deflects the primary electron beam using an electrostatic field to offset a deflection caused by the magnetic lens.

17. (Currently Amended) A scanning electron microscope ~~having~~ comprising:

an electron ~~source~~, source;

an image shifting deflector system including ~~two deflectors disposed respectively at upper and lower stages~~ an upper deflector and a lower deflector to shift an irradiation position of a primary electron beam emitted by the electron source on a specimen, ~~and~~

an objective lens that focuses the primary electron beam; ~~said scanning electron microscope comprising~~

a setting means for setting a position to which the image shifting deflector system shifts an image; and

a setting ~~negating~~ nullifying means that, ~~when responsive to~~ a position set by the setting means ~~is being~~ in a specific region including a center of a deflection range for the image shifting deflector system, ~~negates~~ nullifies the position set by the setting means or provides a warning.